

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 6, 2011

Ensure Access to Care for our Military and Veterans,
Regardless of Location

Become an Original Cosponsor of the
Servicemembers' Telemedicine & E-Health Portability (STEP) Act

Dear Colleague:

Men and women in the Armed Services are sent across the country and globe to protect our freedoms. However, when some in our military require attention, our nation's health care professionals are often hampered by an arcane procedural obstacle regarding state licensure issues. This has become a burden to the DoD, health care professionals serving our veterans, and the patients themselves.

Currently, the DoD has limited ability to allow its health care professionals to provide care when the patient is in a different state. DoD's hands are also tied when it comes to civilians or contractors, who have stepped up to fill shortages in desperately needed positions – especially mental health. As a result, many in the military are required to travel long distances to get help, presenting increased financial burdens and stress. Too often these circumstances contribute to those who need help the most going without, or in some cases, falling through the cracks.

For these many reasons, we will be introducing the ***Servicemembers' Telemedicine and E-Health Portability (STEP) Act***. The bill will expand the current DoD definition of health care professional to include qualified civilians and contractors. It will also expand the DoD state licensure exemption to allow these health care professionals to practice across state borders – as long as they are qualified and practicing within the scope of their authorized federal duties. In this ever-changing, high-tech world, the bill also removes cumbersome location requirements, promoting increased use of telemedicine, tele-healthcare services, and tele-behavioral health programs.

With the increased pressures on today's military, it is important that Congress remove the barriers that prevent access to qualified care. If you have questions about the bill or would like to be added as a cosponsor, please contact Darrell Owens (darrell.owens@mail.house.gov, 5-5121) in Rep. Glenn Thompson's office or Carrie Fiarman (carrie.fiarman@mail.house.gov, 5-5965) in Rep. Shelley Berkley's office.

Together we can take the first STEP in ensuring our brave men and women receive the qualified care they need and deserve – no matter where it is needed.

Sincerely,


Glenn GT Thompson
Member of Congress


Shelley Berkley
Member of Congress